

**REPORT ON THE  
National Association of Counties 2015 Annual Conference &  
Exposition**

Charlotte, North Carolina

July 10 - 13, 2015

The following is a summary of the National Association of Counties 2015 Annual Conference & Exposition sessions attended by Laura Figueira.

**July 11, 2015**

**Opening General Session**

**Riki Hokama, NACo President**

NACo President Riki Hokama summarized NACo's achievements over the past year. Notable achievements include:

- Two symposiums were held relating to financing county transportation improvements, one in Maui County and the second in San Bernadino which focused on county infrastructure challenges.
- NACo is providing more access to data through the County Explorer tool and lobbied for the Highway Trust Fund and funding of MAP21.

Outgoing President Hokama also enumerated continued NACo focus on a number of priorities:

- Repeal or scaling back of tax-exempt municipal bonds
- Reforming the proposed "waters of the United States rule that would expand federal oversight over county-owned and maintained roadside ditches, flood control channels and storm water systems.
- Pursuing adoption of the marketplace Fairness Act which would allow state and local governments to enforce existing laws and stop the loss of billions of dollars in uncollected tax revenue on sales in e-commerce each year.

Other distinguished guest speakers;

- **Ashton Carter, U.S. Secretary of Defense**

Secretary of Defense, Ashton Carter, spoke about the importance of local communities and their important to the military. The foundation that communities provide to citizens is a source of military strength. He noted that only one-percent of our population serves in the military and because the military depends solely on volunteers, they strive to make military service an attractive option. The military can improve its attractiveness by providing more opportunities, geographic diversity, and inroads to business. The Secretary stated that it is critical that the U.S. sustains its technological superiority over other countries. Russia and China and closing the gap. The Secretary asked counties to embrace and empower veterans who are three-times more likely to join civic organizations and are in need of opportunities.

- **Jerry Abramson, White House Director of Intergovernmental Affairs**

Mr. Abramson stated that the President is focused on jobs and middle income households. The U.S. has experienced 64 straight months of private job growth and 12.8 million jobs have been created. At the same time, our budget deficit has been reduced by two-thirds. The President supports county initiatives to require paid medical leave. Currently 43 million citizens are not granted paid leave. The President would also like to see more progress on the minimum wage.

County grants are being cut because of the effects of sequestration. Although sequestration was in effect last year, the effects were not felt because the cuts were pushed back to take effect this year. The President has proposed a budget that will end sequestration.

- **Brad Daugherty, ESPN Analyst and former NBA Basketball Player**

Mr. Daugherty spoke about his experiences playing at the University of North Carolina under the late coach Dean Smith. Coach Smith's coaching philosophy was based on Humility, Service and Leadership. One of the values that he passed on to his players is that service to others provides opportunities for leadership. Mr. Daugherty believes that Coach Smith's success as a coach and leader was due to his ability to relate to and understand people. Coach Smith did not treat each player the same, but instead used different motivational techniques based on each player's personality and temperament. Mr. Daugherty spoke about the many instances that Coach Smith was able to motivate himself and his teammates in different ways.

**July 12, 2015**

**Mobile Workshop: Riding the Rails to Economic Revitalization in Mecklenburg County**

*Speakers: Tina Votaw, TOD Specialist, City of Charlotte*

*Alan Goodwin, Planning Coordinator, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Dept.*

*Chad Hagler, Partner, Woodfield Partners*

*Tobe Holmes, Director, Historic South End at Charlotte Center City Partners*

During this mobile workshop, staff from the City of Charlotte and Mecklenburg Planning Department described their light rail system and the economic effect the rail system has had locally. In addition to riding the rail system, the workshop included a tour of a recently constructed apartment complex near one of the transit stations.

The Charlotte light rail system, named the LYNX Blue Line, is presently 9.6 miles long and opened in 2007. The system is presently being extended by nine miles. Staff members noted that they were familiar with Honolulu's rail project as their extension project is on a similar timeline as our rail project.

With respect to Transit Oriented Development (TOD), there are no direct financial incentives offered to developers. The county, however, does implement TOD zoning incentives which include no limit on density and easing of parking requirements.

Much of the development that has occurred near the transit stations consists of apartment complexes. Staff members noted that historically single-family homes or condominiums were constructed in the Charlotte area rather than apartments. The apartments became popular after the economic downturn in 2009, possibly due to stricter lending standards. It is expected that retail development will also occur around transit stations in the future.

A tour of the Silos South End Apartment project was provided by the project's developer. The project features numerous amenities, such as a poker room, computer room, massage room, fitness center, and pool. Units feature 10-foot ceilings, and upscale finishes such as granite countertops and stainless steel appliances. According to the developer, the project was designed to target young professionals who wish to live in the city. Rents range start at \$1,295 for a studio and \$1,845 for a two-bedroom apartment.



Transit station near the Silos South End apartment project. An approximately 300 yard path connects the project and the transit station.



**July 13, 2015**

## **Closing General Session**

- **Anthony Foxx, Secretary, U.S. Department of Transportation**

Secretary of Transportation, Anthony Foxx, emphasized that a long-term Bill for highway projects is needed. He stated that "No great nation was built by funding its infrastructure in three month cycles." The Administration has proposed a Bill that would increase funding for the Tiger program from \$500 million to \$1.25 billion. The Administration estimates that \$15-\$25 billion above the baseline budget is needed to maintain transportation infrastructure nationwide. The Administration's proposed Grow America Act would provide \$478 billion over six years for transportation improvements. Secretary Foxx asked that counties support the Act as it increases transportation funding over current levels and provides six years of certainty.

- **Soledad O'Brien, CNN**

Soledad O'Brien spoke about being raised in a bi-racial family and her experiences on how communities affect people as a reporter for CNN. Ms. O'Brien stated that "what makes people thrive, are what makes a community work."

Ms. O'Brien spoke about a recent article in the Washington Post about Tunica, Mississippi, as an example of how the local government had failed to provide for area residents. The county had received over \$700 million in casino and gaming revenue, yet a substantial number of residents still lived in poverty.

On the other hand, Ms. O'Brien described how the residents of Salt Lake City, Utah, can be an inspirational example to other communities. After hurricane Katrina, many evacuees were relocated to Salt Lake City. Despite cultural and racial differences, the residents of Salt Lake City embraced the evacuees and provided employment and social outreach, which led many of the evacuees to make Salt Lake City their permanent home.

Ms. O'Brien saw the importance of having a resilient community during a recent visit to the Congo. She visited an impoverished coffee farming community. The coffee is of high quality and would be marketable, however, building a coffee export industry is hampered by high taxes, lack of transportation, and a lack of institutional knowledge.

In closing Ms. O'Brien asked county leaders to deconstruct, rather than copy, best practices and examine why some work and others fail.

City Council  
City and County of Honolulu

# CLAIM FOR TRAVEL REIMBURSEMENT

Date: August 13, 2015

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RECEIVED

CITY COUNCIL  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

Traveler: Laura Figueira

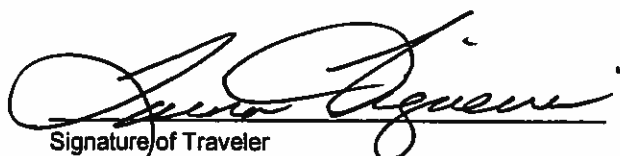
Event: NACO Conference 2015 Annual

Location: Charlotte, NC

Dates: From 7/10/15 To 7/14/15

Description	Amount	Notes:
1. Registration Fee	505.00	
2. Airfare	675.00	
3. Hotel	781.12	
4. Meals		
5. Ground Transportation		
6. Tips		
7. Other	50.00	Baggage Fees
Other		
Other		
8. Adjustment		
TOTAL REIMBURSEMENT	2011.12	

This is to certify that the above data, based upon receipts submitted to Council Administrative Support Services via a CCLTRVL02 form, is accurate. Further, I am claiming reimbursement for expenses associated with a trip in which City business was conducted and personal funds were used to advance payment:

  
Signature of Traveler

August 13, 2015

Date